



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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NOTES AND NEWSNew Zealand Radiocarbon Database

Following the recent retirement of Foss Leach from the University of Otago Ian Smith was appointed by Council to serve as the South Island representative on the NZAA Radiocarbon Screening Committee. Foss has filled this role for the last 14 years, and has been invited to serve on the DSIR Radiocarbon Advisory Committee. In addition, Council has established a new position, a "Radiocarbon Dating Database Manager", which Foss will fill.

New Zealand archaeological sites have been dated by the radiocarbon method since the early 1950s, and on average 300 archaeological samples per year are processed. Over this 30 year period a very large paper file has accumulated containing detailed information about stratigraphy of sites, much of which is not published. It therefore represents a most valuable archive of knowledge. The basic scientific data on all these samples is held on a DSIR computer file, and Association members can gain access to this through Foss for the purpose of recalculating old dates using up to date methods, or obtaining conventional radiocarbon (now an accepted standard for reporting), or dates corrected for marine reservoir and secular effects. A start has been made on the formidable task of entering more details from old submission forms into a computer file so that in the future more flexible research can be carried out on the accumulating dating evidence. Any enquiries should be addressed to: Foss Leach, P.O. Box 26073, Newlands, Wellington.

Radiocarbon Dating Screening Committee: Waikato

The NZAA Council has established a screening committee for samples being submitted to the University of Waikato Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory. The screening committee will operate on similar lines to the Institute of Nuclear Sciences Screening Committee. The primary objective of both committees is to ensure reliable dates are produced. Samples for the Waikato lab should be forwarded to Dr Neville Ritchie, Regional Archaeologist, Department of Conservation, Private Bag, Hamilton (Ph. (071) 383-363). All charcoal samples should include wood identifications from appropriate specialists.

Recent fieldwork

Projects in rescue archaeology have continued in Auckland as the re-development in the Central Business District

continues to uncover traces of early Auckland. Atholl Anderson has undertaken further excavations at Shag River Mouth site (during November-December 1988) and Chris Jacomb has been carrying out excavations at the Johnston site (during January-February 1989). Evidence of occupation (mostly pits and some midden) has been uncovered adjacent to the wetlands where wooden artefacts were found earlier this century.

Debbie Foster has undertaken a survey of the West Whanganui Inlet on the far north-west coast of the South Island. Main findings were a number of coastal middens, with some 40 sites recorded in the course of the two week survey. Debbie has also been employed by DoC on a survey of the Nuhiti Block on the coast between Anaura and Tokomaru Bays. The area was recently the scene of an interesting exchange by way of cross-leasing Crown farmland in return for an area of high natural conservation value owned by Maori interests.

DoC has also just received a report from Pam Chester on the palynology of Mana Island. Mana Island lies off the entrance to Porirua Harbour and is being developed as a nature and historic reserve, 50 years after its companion island, Kapiti, received similar treatment. Greater care is being taken in the new case to ensure appropriate vegetation is established.

Sites were sampled to measure the nature of the contemporary pollen rain on the island, with the substantive samples taken from a low-lying flat and in an area of established forest on the island. The main cover on the island appears to have been dominated by Leptospermum species (manuka, kanuka). A radiocarbon date to be received may confirm this pattern to have been prevalent before human arrival. The result is in some conflict with botanists' expectations of the cover, on which the current re-vegetation is based. The debate is expected to continue ...

Another report recently received at DoC/NZHPT Central Office is:

Wellington Harbour Maritime Planning Authority 1988.  
Historical and cultural resources study of the  
Wellington Harbour Maritime Planning Area.  
107 pp.

This report brings together "previously widely scattered information thus providing a data base and reference for future planning and development" (Preface). Part One is a study by Peter Adds of "Traditional Maori sites and resources of the Wellington Harbour Maritime Planning Area" (pp 8-35). The author notes "it cannot be emphasised enough that while there is undoubted merit in formulating planning schemes and identifying places that are culturally significant on maps,

there can be no real substitute in planning processes for an on-going dialogue between planners and locally affected groups, such as Maori tribal authorities, councils, and other organisations such as the Historic Places Trust" (pg 12) and "there are enormous problems associated with the evaluation of non-renewable cultural resources ...The problem is that all sites and cultural resources are significant to some degree but some sites are more significant than others depending on what the frame of reference is" (pg 13). Finally he again stresses the desirability of maintaining a dialogue with the various interested individuals and groups.

### New Publications

Newman, M. 1988. Archaeological Investigations in the vicinity of Lake Rotoaira and the lower Tongariro River 1966-1971. N.Z. Historic Places Trust Publication 21. 132 pp.

This monograph describes the investigations carried out by Trevor Hosking while he was project archaeologist on the Tongariro Power Development Scheme. It is available from the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, P.O. Box 2629, Wellington. The cost is \$25.50 and this includes both GST and postage (within New Zealand).

Foster, R. and B. Sewell 1988. An open settlement in Tamaki, Auckland. Excavation of sites R11/887, R11/888, and R11/899. Department of Conservation Science & Research Series No 5. 71 pp.

This publication is available from Science Publication Manager, Conservation Sciences Centre, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 10420, Wellington. The cost is \$22.00 (includes GST and postage within New Zealand).

These two publications will be reviewed in a future issue.

A report on last year's excavations at Fort Ligar (which dates to 1845) has been produced:

Smith, I. 1989. Rediscovering Fort Ligar: Archaeology at R11/1656, Auckland. Volume I: Excavation and site history. Department of Conservation Science & Research Internal Report 40. 38 pp.

Volume II (not yet available) will deal with the artefact assemblages and faunal material.

Also available is a report on obsidian sourcing:

Moore, P. 1988. Physical characteristics of New Zealand obsidians and their use in archaeological sourcing studies. 23 pp.

The abstract reads:

"Various physical features, including colour, lustre, fracture, translucency, flow banding, and the presence of spherulites and crystal inclusions can be used to identify the original source of obsidian artefacts. The characteristics of obsidian from 20 known source areas and 3 source regions (new terms) in New Zealand are described.

A standard procedure for sourcing of obsidian artefacts, using a 'flow diagram' and comparison with reference material, is outlined. Using this procedure a flake assemblage from North Cape is shown to have been derived from 3 main source areas/regions: Pungaere/Waiare (Northland), Mayor Island, and the Coromandel Volcanic Zone."

The report is available for \$6.00 (covers xeroxing, postage, GST) from the author, State Highway 25, R.D.1, Waihi.

The contents of Vol 10 (1988) of the New Zealand Journal of Archaeology are:

Brenda Sewell, The fishhook assemblage from the Cross Creek Site (N40/260; T10/399), Sarah's Gully, Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand (pp 5).

Kevin Jones, Horticulture and settlement chronology of the Waipaoa River catchment, East Coast, North Island, New Zealand (pp 19).

Caroline Phillips, University of Auckland Field School excavations at Waiwhau, 1987 (pp 53).

Alexandra Brewis, Assessing infant mortality in prehistoric New Zealand: a life table approach (pp 73).

Janet Davidson, Archaeology in Micronesia since 1965: past achievements and future prospects (pp 83).

P.V. Kirch, W.R. Dickinson, and T.L. Hunt, Polynesian plainware sherds from Hivaooa and their implications for early Marquesan prehistory (pp 101).

Richard Cassels, Kevin Jones, Tony Walton, and Trevor Worthy, Late prehistoric subsistence practices at Parewanui, Lower Rangitikei River, New Zealand (pp 109).

Pat Grant, Interpretation of evidence for the early prehistory of New Zealand: reply to Sutton (pp 129).

Bruce McFadgen, Landsnail analysis: reply to Wallace (pp 135).

N.J. Enright and N.M. Osborne, Comments on D.G. Sutton's paper: 'A paradigmatic shift in Polynesian prehistory: implications for New Zealand' (pp 139).

Doug Sutton, Reply to Enright and Osborne (pp 149).

Another recently published paper of interest is:

Enright, N.J. and M.J. Anderson 1988. Recent evolution of the Mangawai Spit dunefield. Jnl Royal Soc N.Z. 18:359-367.

Enright and Anderson examine evidence of environmental change in the Mangawai Spit dunefield, Northland, over the last 800-900 years. Amongst the dates reported are two on middens: 403±29 (NZ6593A) and 418±34 (NZ6609A).

#### News from NZHPT

"Historic Places Legislation Review: A paper for public comment" was released in December with a closing date for submissions of 17 March 1989. The discussion paper throws up questions on almost every aspect of the existing legislation; it thus makes it very difficult to comment on anything at all. NZAA Council has indicated that it supports the retention of the principles embodied in the present legislation.

The Historic Sites Committee met for the first time on 23 August 1988. This Committee replaces the Archaeology Committee which had held its last meeting some fifteen months previously. The agenda included items on the composition of the Committee, its terms of reference, the relationship between DoC and NZHPT (this is still far from settled, particularly in relation to archaeology), and the NZHPT archaeology budget. The Committee is made up of four members of NZHPT Board (Harry Allen, Dave McKerchar, Eric Olssen, and Alan Talbot), and three co-opted members (John Klarisich, Tipene O'Regan, and Helen Leach). Further business was dealt with by telephone conference on 30 September, and at a further meeting on 7 December. A special combined meeting of the Maori Advisory Committee and the Historic Sites Committee was held on 24 January 1989 to discuss issues raised in the Historic Places Legislation Review discussion paper.

The other NZHPT committee of importance to archaeology is the Maori Advisory Committee. It is currently is made up of two Board members (Mrs Lena Manuel (Chair) and Eric Olssen) and

five others (Atholl Anderson, Te Aue Davis, Tipene O'Regan, Pat Park, and Maui Pomare). The Committee is pushing hard to have the protection of traditional sites strengthened in the new Historic Places legislation. Government has already agreed to some measures which will enhance the protection of some known wahi tapu/urupa. Such sites on land the government proposes to sell will be identified and surveyed, and will not be sold along with rest of the land.

The new Director of NZHPT, Mr Geoffrey Whitehead, took up the position in early February. The Director's background is in broadcasting - he has previously been head of Radio New Zealand and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

#### Australian Archaeological Association Conference 1988

The 1988 AAA Conference was held at the University of New England, Armidale, in December. Alongside the usual sessions on Australian archaeology and cultural resource management was a session on "Pacific archaeology" including a paper reporting Pleistocene dates from Kula Cave on Buka Island demonstrating human settlement by 28,000 BP (see Stephen Wickler and Mathew Spriggs - "Pleistocene human occupation of the Solomon Islands, Melanesia" Antiquity 62 (1988) 703-6). This follows a recent report of settlement back to 33,000 BP in New Ireland (Nature 331 (1988) 707-9). There were also papers on the ANU Lapita Homeland Project. Two different schools of thought have emerged on Lapita: one school has people with origins in Southeast Asia passing rapidly through Melanesia, while the other sees Lapita as an indigenous development with only minor external influences on the course of events in the region.

Numbers of other papers stood out but one with some immediate relevance to New Zealand was Dr Colin Pardoe's "an optimistic appraisal of skeletal studies in archaeology". The handling of skeletal remains is proving a very difficult area for archaeologists and physical anthropologists in Australia. Dr Pardoe argues that "the description of 'scientific value' has been aimed at the wrong groups. It has never made sense to tell ourselves how valuable the bones are: we already know that ...What is necessary is to make these notions known to other involved groups, in this case the Aboriginal community". He argues that where communities allow remains to be examined the remains should be returned with a report "in an appropriate form". This requires archaeologists to change the style of their reports and address them to the local community (not other archaeologists) and to generally improve the appearance of the reports and the standard of presentation.

The 1989 conference will be held in Mildura in December.